

MID-LEVEL OFFICERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Mid-Level Program is a rigorous, graduate-level course of study designed to provide professional training in policy development and operations in the complex Washington environment and professional education in the substantive areas of concern in foreign affairs. The Program provides newly-tenured officers the requisite knowledge, training and skills for increasing responsibilities in the 10 to 15 years span extending from the time they receive tenure to the senior officer threshold. The program consists of four primary segments:

1. The Changing Global Context

The opening segment of the program outlines and analyzes global trends and emerging issues that will shape the foreign affairs agenda over the next decade. It highlights implications of the changing context for foreign policy and the security decisions that policymakers are likely to face during the participants' mid-level career.

This unit also introduces officers to various analytic perspectives and methods and, with a focus on energy as a global issue, acquaints participants with some of the underlying forces that create global political and economic issues. Participants also examine the meaning of "professionalism" and are introduced to an anticipatory, rather than reactive, way of thinking about policy issues. Global security, demographic, agricultural, resource and environmental trends are analyzed for their impact at international, national and local levels.

2. Advanced Functional Courses

Approximately one-third of the program concentrates on career development in specialized fields--administrative, consular, economic, and political. During these 7 weeks, participants acquire knowledge and skills which will enhance their performance as mid-career officers and prepare them to assume the responsibilities of senior positions in their areas of specialization. The advanced courses deepen the officers' knowledge of their specialty, show the interrelationship with other cones and agencies, and provide skills that will improve their ability to analyze and present (in writing and orally) the results of their analysis.

3. Executive Development

Executive leadership training is also a principal element in the mid-level program. This segment includes a systematic approach to program and human resource management, as well as training in negotiations and development of bureaucratic skills and understanding essentials for providing leadership and coordination of foreign policy formulation and implementation. It also provides each officer an opportunity for assessment of managerial aptitude and career planning.

4. Elective Courses

In the final month of the program officers develop basic expertise in an area of key importance in foreign affairs outside of their primary specialty. During this period, elective courses are offered in Political-Military Affairs, Science and Technology, Energy, Political Analysis, and the Washington Foreign Policy Process. Additional electives will be added and changes made as appropriate needs are identified.

The mid-level program is a challenging educational "hybrid" combining the best available theoretical perspectives with practical skills and problem-solving. Participants in the course are all dedicated professionals with significant foreign affairs experience and the learning experience is very intense. With its focus on applications of theoretical knowledge to foreign affairs problems, the program goes well beyond anything presently offered or contemplated in college and university programs.

The mid-level program makes use of modern learning techniques, integrating plenary lectures with small group discussions, workshops, simulations, group research projects, case studies, films and reports. The program is rigorous, requiring at least five classroom hours daily. Reading assignments are significant and require another three to four hours of daily effort. FSI has been able to attract a high level internal and external resource staff which combines the best elements of academic and practical foreign policy experience.